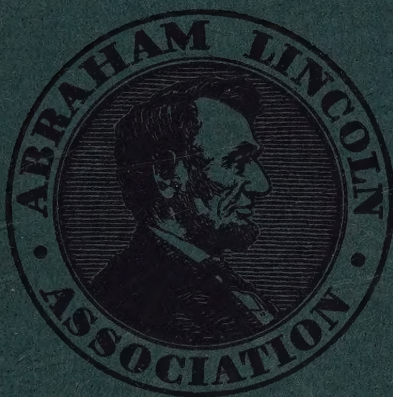




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Abraham Lincoln
Association
Papers

Abraham Lincoln Association Papers

*Delivered Before the Members of the
Abraham Lincoln Association*

INTRODUCTION

By LOGAN HAY, President, Abraham Lincoln Association



LINCOLN AND THE PRESS

By JOHN CALLAN O'LAUGHLIN, Washington, D. C.



LINCOLN'S PLANS FOR REUNION

By ALLAN NEVINS, New York City

*at Springfield, Illinois, on
February 12, 1930*



Springfield, Illinois

ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION

1931

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Foreword

THE Abraham Lincoln Association Papers for 1930, like the six volumes which have preceded it, is made up of the addresses delivered under the Association's auspices on February 12th of the year designated in the title. At the 1930 meeting, as in the past, two papers were read: one by Allan Nevins of New York City on "Lincoln's Plans for Reunion," the other by John Callan O'Laughlin, then of San Diego, California, now of Washington, D. C., on "Lincoln and the Press." These papers are here presented in permanent form.

It has been customary, in introducing each new volume of Papers to the members of the Abraham Lincoln Association and other readers, to touch briefly upon certain phases of the Association's work during the year which the volume represents.

The most significant event in 1930 was the publication of "New Letters and Papers of Lincoln." This volume, brought out in March by the Houghton Mifflin Company, is the result of several years of work. It is gratifying to record that the opinions of critics

and the record of its sales both testify that it has met a real need. In addition, the regular publications of the Association have been issued as usual: two more of the series of daily records (*Lincoln in the Year 1856* and *Lincoln in the Year 1857*), and four issues of the *Bulletin*, enlarged in size and considerably improved in format. Mention should be made, too, of the new edition of Herndon's *Lincoln*, critically edited and annotated, which Mr. Angle, the Association's Secretary, has recently published.

During the year 1930 the Abraham Lincoln Association has been largely concerned with several projects which, though outside its routine activities, come well within the scope of its aims. In these projects several officers and members have been active, and a considerable portion of the Secretary's time has been devoted to them.

The last General Assembly initiated three movements of prime importance. It provided for the appointment of a commission to plan for a suitable memorial to Abraham Lincoln, it provided for the location and marking of a Lincoln Memorial Highway which should follow the route traversed by the Lincoln family in their journey to Illinois and also furnish access to nearby places of Lincoln interest, and it provided an appropriation for the reconstruction of the Lincoln Monument.

The tentative conclusions of the Lincoln Memorial Commission can be summarized very briefly, since they have already been described in some detail in one of the recent Bulletins of the Association. The members of the Commission are of the opinion that the reconstruction of the actual places in which Lincoln lived and worked would constitute the most fitting memorial which the State of Illinois could erect. Included in the program would be the restoration of the Lincoln farms in Macon and Coles Counties, the complete rebuilding of the village of New Salem, the restoration of the old state houses at Springfield and Vandalia and the old court house at Metamora, and, generally speaking, the adequate marking of places of Lincoln interest throughout the state. The Commission realizes that the accomplishment of this program will require considerable time, but it believes it to be practicable, and it is convinced that the result will not only be unique, but also of great educational value.

In connection with the rebuilding of the Lincoln Monument Mr. C. Herrick Hammond, State Architect, has frequently called several of the officers and members of the Association into consultation. At his request quotations from Lincoln's writings and a short biographical sketch of Lincoln's life, suitable for inscription on a series of bronze tablets, have been

prepared. We consider the performance of this duty a rare privilege.

The Association's most extensive work, however, has been in connection with the Lincoln Memorial Highway. Considerable controversy has developed over the exact location of this route, with the result that Governor Emmerson has referred the question to a committee of five, all of whom are members of the Association. The Committee has held public hearings and made a personal investigation of the proposed routes, while the Association's Secretary has been conducting intensive research in such matters as early roads, population and land entries in an effort to settle the Lincoln route definitely. At the present time it appears likely that the investigating committee will be unable, by reason of the absence of conclusive evidence, to establish the exact location of the route the Lincolns followed, but in any event a positive gain of some importance in historical knowledge seems assured.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

The Abraham Lincoln Association.

Springfield, Illinois,

December 1, 1930.

Introduction

BY LOGAN HAY

President, Abraham Lincoln Association

Introduction

FELLOW CITIZENS:

We meet today to commemorate the 121st birthday of Abraham Lincoln. We may state the same thing differently. A hundred years ago to-day was Lincoln's twenty-first birthday and in the eye of the law he ceased to be a boy and became a man. On this centenary before introducing the first speaker, we may well look back and recall briefly Lincoln at twenty-one and the first year of his maturity.

Describing himself at twenty-one and the influences under which he had grown up, Lincoln afterwards said:

"My father, at the death of his father, was but six years of age, and he grew up literally without education. He removed from Kentucky to what is now Spencer County, Indiana, in my eighth year. We reached our new home about the time the State came into the Union. It was a wild region, with many bears and other wild animals still in the woods. There I grew up. There were some schools, so called, but no qualification was ever required of a teacher beyond 'readin', writin', and cipherin'' to the rule of

three. If a straggler supposed to understand Latin happened to sojourn in the neighborhood, he was looked upon as a wizard. Of course, when I came of age I did not know much. Still, somehow, I could read, write and cipher to the rule of three, but that was all."

The Lincolns yet lived on the Pigeon Creek Farm in Indiana.

On the first of March, 1830, the Lincoln-Hanks-Hall clan assembled all their worldly possessions and started their trip across country to establish a new home in the Sangamo country in Illinois, distant some two hundred miles. Five men, three women and four or five children made up the party. The route took them by Vincennes, where Lincoln first saw a printing press. On the journey Lincoln peddled a small peddler's stock, which he had purchased at the Gentryville store, doubling his purchase price.

And so, in March, 1830, after an arduous overland journey, during which the party crossed icy rivers and streams without the aid of bridges and provisioned themselves as best they might from meal to meal and slept at night wherever they happened to be when darkness fell, the clan reached the place which John Hanks had selected as the site of their new home.

It was, as you know, on the north bank of the Sangamon, between here and Decatur, in Macon county, a few miles east of the Sangamon line. No cabin

awaited them, but John Hanks had cut the necessary logs and the men fell to and in a few days a log cabin was ready for occupancy. The clan moved into their new home and the job of moving from Indiana to Illinois was done.

Macon county had been established as a separate county in the preceding year. The first court to be held within its bounds was yet a matter of the future. Its area was about fourteen hundred square miles, more than twice the area of the present Macon county. Its population was about eleven hundred. There were less than five families to the governmental township of six miles square.

Decatur, its county seat, was a settlement of some thirty families. There were no schools or churches nor any of the other institutions of a settled country in the county. The community was more primitive than the old home in Indiana.

The spring and early summer were spent in clearing ten or fifteen acres of ground, in planting the clearing in corn, in splitting rails and in enclosing the clearing with a worm fence, Lincoln meantime continuing to live with the family and assisting in establishing the new home. Later in the summer he hired himself out to work for a neighboring farmer. Yet later he split rails, which he bartered for jeans to be made into trousers for himself.

Thirty years later, in 1860, the State Republican Convention called to meet at Decatur for the purpose of electing delegates to the Republican National Convention, was in session. The convention hall was crowded. John Hanks appeared at the door with some of these rails. John and the rails were piloted through the surging crowd to the platform by that able political seaman, Richard J. Oglesby, whom many of us knew. Metaphorically these rails permeated the ensuing presidential campaign and ever since have given their touch of color to the Lincoln legend.

The removal to Illinois was Thomas Lincoln's second removal within fifteen years from a more settled to a less settled country. The selection of the Sangamo country as the new home appears to have been the act of Dennis Hanks. You know Dennis Hanks, oddest of the Lincoln-Hanks-Hall clan. Illegitimately born into the clan some eight or ten years before Abraham Lincoln's birth, he was an intimate of Lincoln's until Lincoln was about twenty-two and as Dennis would have it, Lincoln grew up under his tutelage. Then he fades out of Lincoln's life.

He reappears vividly in the Lincoln story shortly after Lincoln's death. Herndon then propounded to him in deposition form many written questions. He answered the questions and gave full explanations

of his answers. He volunteered much unasked-for information about himself and Lincoln, and made extravagant statements about his part in Lincoln's education and development. He almost boastfully described himself as a "woods colt," referring to his illegitimate birth. In the '70's he was one of the features of Barnum's Museum in New York, the hand bills portraying him in high silk hat and frock coat as the man who taught Abe Lincoln his "abc's."

Such was Lincoln's life during the first year after he became of age, and such was his environment in his new Illinois home. Lincoln had shown no particular initiative. He seemed to be drifting into the same inconspicuous life of a pioneer farmer which his ancestors had lived for three or four generations before him.

It is worth recalling that Lincoln's critics often afterwards were to contend that he was indecisive in character and lacking in initiative.

In the early part of 1831 Denton Offutt, the Colonel Sellers of the Lincoln drama, appeared upon the scene, and Lincoln's life took a new direction, but that, as Kipling says, is another thing.

We have selected "Lincoln and the Press" as the subject for our first paper this afternoon. We selected this subject because early Lincoln came to realize that

in a democracy public sentiment is all powerful, and that public sentiment can be affected more readily and more continuously through the press than through any other agency. This because it reaches more people and reaches them more continuously, than any other agency.

We selected Col. John Callan O'Laughlin to write the paper upon this subject, and he has graciously complied with our request.

Colonel O'Laughlin became a newspaperman before he was of age, and that has been his profession ever since. He is now, and for some years has been editor-in-chief of the Copley Press, which includes the Illinois State Journal, the successor of the Sangamo Journal of Lincoln's time. As a newspaperman, he has served at various places at home and abroad, as regular correspondent and on special missions, for newspapers too numerous to mention.

From time to time he has been called to other service. He was secretary to the United States Commission to the Tokyo Exposition. He gained his military title in France during the World War. He has written magazine articles and worth while books.

He was closely associated with Roosevelt for more than twenty years. He served under Roosevelt as First Assistant Secretary of State. He was one of the important instrumentalities through which Roose-

velt dealt with the press, and sought to influence public opinion.

Colonel O'Laughlin, by reason of engagements which keep him at Los Angeles, cannot be with us today. His paper will be read by A. W. Shipton, the general manager of the Illinois State Journal. Mr. Shipton has been a resident of Springfield only a few years. During that brief period he has gained our respect and esteem and a highly influential place in this community. Mr. Shipton.

Lincoln and the Press

*Delivered by JOHN CALLAN O'LAUGHLIN before the
Abraham Lincoln Association, in the Circuit Court
Room, Springfield, Illinois, February 12, 1930.*

Lincoln and the Press

LINCOLN learned in his youth the power of the pen. Throughout his career, he employed in the attainment of his ambitions and especially for the restoration of the Union, the power of the press. The so-called newspaper of his day, when compared with the comprehensive journal of our time, was poor in size, in type face, in make-up. Still it was the medium of thought conveyance—little letters of lead which spread light and reason or darkness and confusion, as owners and editors dictated. Lincoln used it on occasions in a manner that today would bring him public and private scorn, and on others, especially in the great tragedy of our country, with lofty and noble purpose. He used also, in his own inimitable way, the men who owned the newspapers. Helping him to shape his career, to promote its progress, were such journalists as Francis of the *Sangamo Journal*, now the *Illinois State Journal*, Medill, the founder of the *Chicago Tribune*, and, without desire so to do, Greeley of the *New York Tribune*. We find him corresponding with owners and editors, including

those he did not know personally, cultivating their interest, in part by tactfully pointing to mistakes in their editorial and news columns, and even descending to thinly disguised bribes to enlist support. He sought out and became acquainted with correspondents and reporters and obtained their personal good will by the interest he displayed in them and their work; and his point of view often found reflection, as this astute politician desired, in the reports they published.

The journalism of Lincoln's youth was personal journalism, its distinctive characteristic party politics, its principal purpose abuse of personal and party enemies. Gross and false insinuations against private character and the use of such objurgative expressions as "pestilential scoundrels," "obscene vagabond," "loathsome and leprous slanderer and libeler," and the like, were accepted as necessary missiles of journalistic guns. Such violent partisanship was more or less imposed in the thirties of the last century, because the reward it carried was office or public printing; and that reward enabled the editor to live and publish. It took the genius of Bennett to change this state of affairs. Before the young Scotchman got into the full swing of reporting for his *New York Herald*, founded in 1835 when Lincoln was serving his first term in the Illinois State Legislature, it was not the

custom to print news. There was plenty of it, of course. There was crime as sensational as that which we have today, yet murders were dismissed in a few lines. There was the opening of the Great West with its myriad tales of romance, of tragedy, of grinding hardship. There were Indian massacres and Indian attacks. But in its reporting the early press was hampered by all manner of restrictions and by lack of quick communication. It was forbidden to print bankruptcies and among other things, to exploit court proceedings. To the editor of that time all such matters in any case were not regarded as news. Party politics were the dominant source of interest, and reports of them were garbled and twisted to accord with the views and selfish interest of the editor and his backer. There was no dearth of these so-called newspapers. They sprang up like weeds, but as itinerant printers found to their cost, they were easier to start than to maintain. Their space was filled with local political or personal comment, usually vituperative, and with extracts from exchanges, the extracts being only those which met the peculiar needs or views of the editor.

A year after the Lincoln family had settled in Illinois, Abraham struck out for himself. In 1831 he appeared alone in New Salem. There, from the time of his arrival, he read the *Sangamo Journal*, then a

weekly, the editors and publishers of which were Simeon and Josiah Francis. The *Journal* had been founded in the same year of Lincoln's arrival in New Salem. He read also the *National Intelligencer*, published at Washington, the organ of the National Republican party, and the *Missouri Republican*, which, less partisan, printed extracts from newspapers of all shades of opinion. In the *Sangamo Journal*, Lincoln found a point of view in consonance with his own. Francis, editorializing on South Carolina's ordinance of secession in 1832, declaring the tariff acts of 1832 "null, void and no law," expressed the view that the Union was in "imminent danger" and called upon every "good citizen to rally around the Holy banner of our Constitution." More denunciatory, if possible, of South Carolina's action, which it was predicted would lead to civil war, were the *Louisville Journal*, *Missouri Republican*, and the *National Intelligencer*. Lincoln also read other papers. He became postmaster, and from what we know of the tendency of country postmasters to examine all the mail of their office, it is certainly likely that Lincoln seized upon every newspaper that came and at least glanced over its contents before delivery.

In time the *Journal* developed into a solid base from which Lincoln could conduct his political-press

operations. It not only served as a vehicle for his views, but, through the exchanges it received, he kept informed of the editorial thought throughout the state and nation. Alone, the *Journal* was helpful, but Lincoln visioned the value arising from other connections in Illinois. At first his efforts to make them were confined to his own congressional district, and their results are dimly seen through the mist of time. He had been beaten for the congressional nomination in 1843 and again in 1844. From the moment of his second defeat, he utilized the newspapers to help his own cause and to hurt and hinder his rivals. Take, for example, the preliminaries of the congressional campaign of 1846. He was desperately afraid that the former Congressman John J. Hardin, would announce himself as the Whig candidate for Congress. Craftily he pressed the idea that Hardin should be the candidate for Governor, which would leave the congressional field clear for him, with perhaps his only opponent, the sitting Congressman, Mr. Baker. Consider in revelation of this political manœuvre, a letter he wrote to "Friend James," (Benjamin F. James, editor of the *Tazewell Whig*). Lincoln admitted he did not care to "be suspected that he was attempting to juggle Hardin out of a nomination for Congress by juggling him into one for Governor." In the same letter he said he would have no objec-

tion "if you and the other papers a little more distant from me, choose to take the same course you have (Hardin for Governor)," and then he cannily added the line he often used in his communications "Confidential, of course." To Henry E. Dummer, whom Lincoln succeeded as partner in the Stuart law firm, Lincoln wrote asking him to see that the *Beardstown Gazette* took no stand that would injure the chances of his nomination, "unless the conductor really prefers General Hardin, in which case I suppose it would be fair." Apparently Dummer carried out his mission successfully, for to "Friend James," Lincoln wrote on January 14, 1846: "The Beardstown paper is entirely in the hands of my friends. The editor is a Whig and personally dislikes Hardin." But the effort to make Hardin run for Governor failed. Hardin was stubborn and would not permit himself to be led into the chase of the gubernatorial Will-O'-the-Wisp. He announced his candidacy for Congress, and to the embarrassment of Lincoln, proposed a limited primary to determine the nominee. Lincoln turned to the press to effect its defeat. "I want you," he wrote to "Friend James," "to let nothing prevent your getting an article in your paper of this week, taking strong ground for the old system under which Hardin and Baker were nominated, without seeming to know or suspect that anyone desires to change it." The *Sanga-*

mo Journal also printed as its own, the Lincoln view of the Hardin proposal. As a result, Hardin abandoned the fight in disgust. And now we find the triumphant Lincoln, with greater political experience and tempered by the discipline which defeat had imposed, moving from the county and the state to the national atmosphere of Washington.

Upon the expiration of his one term in Congress, Lincoln returned to Illinois, his political prospects seriously damaged. With the progress of time and events, however, the march grows swifter for the country and for Lincoln. The ominous word "secession" sounds in louder tone in the South and is uttered with sinister import on the floors of Congress. There is hurled, too, the threat of internecine war. The South is defiant in its purpose to maintain slavery. The North is apprehensive that extension of slavery will lead to Southern domination of the Government. Lincoln out of Congress, out of public office, could not separate himself from public life. His interest in politics, his urge for political preferment, his experience in Washington, his attendance upon the Whig National Convention in Philadelphia, the plaudits of the people and the press when he was in Massachusetts in 1848, all caused him to continue on the road prepared by destiny. He could measure, too, with greater clarity his advantages and disadvantages. He had begun to

form acquaintances among the national political leaders, including Thurlow Weed, the New York Whig politician and editor of the *Albany Evening Journal*, and Greeley, who served a short time in the Congress in which he had sat. He was becoming more national in viewpoint, though he never lost contact with his district and state. Kentuckian by birth—a fact to which he referred emphatically in a communication to the Governor of Kentucky at the outbreak of the Civil War;—Springfield, southern in sympathy—his wife's family of the slave owning class—he was in an atmosphere of anti-abolition. Mrs. Lincoln subscribed for and received the *Southern Literary Messenger* and we know the care with which Lincoln read its leading articles, signed by prominent Southern men. From Herndon and from Herndon sources, Lincoln got the abolitionist viewpoint. This junior partner corresponded with Sumner, Greeley, Phillips and Garrison, and particularly was a follower of that passionate anti-slavery champion, Theodore Parker. Herndon said, "I take *Garrison's Liberator* and he (Lincoln) takes the *National Era* and the *Western Citizen*." Lincoln and Herndon also took the *Charleston Mercury* and *Richmond Enquirer*, rabid Southern advocates. The *Congressional Globe*, with its reports of the Congressional debates of the early fifties, and the *National Intelligencer* likewise came to Lincoln. His

newspaper taking habit is indicated in a letter which he wrote to John E. Rosette, editor of the *Springfield Republican*: "When the paper was brought to my house, my wife said to me, 'Now are you going to take another little worthless paper?' I said to her *evasively*, 'I have not directed the paper to be left.'"

The law was Lincoln's means of livelihood, and he pursued it after his retirement from Congress. But politics were his mistress, and while, eight years later, he said at this period, he was beginning to lose interest in them, the facts show that he did not escape their thrall. He watched the breach which sectionalism was making in both the Whig and Democratic parties. He wrote the call for the Illinois State Whig Convention in 1851, and directed the party's operations in the State in the Presidential campaign of 1852. Douglas spoke in Richmond at a meeting of ratification of the national Democratic nominations and "the great Richmond speech of Judge Douglas" was printed in full by the *Illinois State Register*. Lincoln replied before the Scott Club of Springfield, and in another speech shortly thereafter, he indicated his confidence in at least one of the papers he constantly read by describing the *National Intelligencer* as "a paper which is not often misled and never intentionally misleads others." During the campaign of 1854 a paragraph was published by the *Chicago*

Journal in approval of Lincoln's scathing criticism of the Nebraska "iniquity" which was to be the guide for future publicity regarding him and which was powerfully to aid in the development of his popularity. "Mr. Lincoln," said this newspaper "has seen something of life—not in the common acceptance of the phrase, but in reality. Born of parents who could only give him faith in rectitude and virtue, he became what he is through the trials of poverty and by the sweat of his brow. How he guided a flatboat over the Ohio or how he had his last article of property consisting of a chain and compass, sold under the sheriff's hammer, are matters of small interest now. How he became the most powerful speaker and one of the ablest lawyers in the West are of more moment."

All these things played their part in building Lincoln, preparing him for the colossal task which a few years later he was to undertake. He was becoming better and better known in Illinois and beginning to attract attention in the eastern press. His unsuccessful campaign for the Senate in 1854 and his failure to get the republican vice presidential nomination in 1856, gave him prominence which caused editors at least to see his name in the copy they received. Then came the campaign of 1858, when, as a republican, he sought again the senatorship, this time against his life-long rival Douglas. We find him an-

noyed at Greeley, the press apostle of abolition and republicanism, because the New York editor was constantly expressing admiration for Douglas. "What does the *New York Tribune* mean by its constant eulogizing and admiring and magnifying Douglas?" he asked. Herndon goes to New York, sees Greeley. "Douglas is a brave man, forget the past and sustain the righteous." Cold comfort that, for Lincoln. During the summer of the campaign, Greeley says he will be "reasonable" and that helps. Then Greeley writes to Medill that in Lincoln, the Chicago editor has an elephant on his hands, and also stated that Douglas "did not weigh so much as he expected, and he always knew he wouldn't." Seeking to promote harmony in republican ranks, Lincoln moves to soften the animadversions of the republican Illinois press against "Long John" Wentworth, owner and editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, the man, who it was charged later, plotted to get the republican senatorial nomination for himself. In this campaign a sub-committee on Ways and Means of the State Republican Committee was created. Joseph Medill was named as a member. Thus, Lincoln was brought into a more intimate relationship with the *Chicago Tribune*. At a meeting of the sub-committee, plans were adopted to promote republican propaganda. Even subscription campaigns to increase the circulation of republican papers, in-

cluding the *Tribune's*, were launched. One of the circulation solicitors, and a failure at that, was John G. Nicolay, who had been editor of the *Pike County Free Press*. It was this Nicolay who so creditably served Lincoln in the White House. A substantial bit of evidence in support of the circulation activities in which Lincoln engaged is furnished by an agreement, written and signed by Lincoln, under which he and friends were to supply five hundred dollars to be used in providing circulation for the *Missouri Democrat* in southern and central Illinois.

The debates with Douglas gave Lincoln the national advertising he needed, and when the election occurred, though he had lost, yet, as he stated, he had won. The republican party received a plurality of the votes, but the way in which the state was districted assured the reelection of Douglas; it had developed a wide knowledge of republican principles, it had formed a good organization, and it possessed organs which could be depended upon to spread its propaganda. Lincoln enjoyed all these advantages, and more; for his name was now well known in Illinois and comparatively well known throughout the nation. He received invitations to lecture, one from the Young Men's Central Republican Union of New York, which he accepted for February 27, 1860. He began to be talked about for the Presidency. Writing

to T. J. Pickett, editor of the *Tazewell Mirror*, Lincoln deprecated a "concerted effort" to name him for the office. Yet we know, in spite of this evidence, that there was a "concerted" movement to this end; that it was discussed, and the plans therefor formed by the Republican State Committee at a meeting in the office of the *Chicago Tribune*; that to make it appear the demand for Lincoln came from the grass roots, it was decided to have the country newspapers first mention his availability, and that Medill, who for a time, seems to have been for Chase, went to Washington ostensibly to correspond for the *Chicago Tribune*, but really to promote Lincoln among the political leaders there. "Honest Abe," as he had become known, must have been thoroughly informed of these various steps, if, indeed, his agile mind did not inspire at least some of them, for otherwise doubt would be cast upon the political sagacity for which he was famed. It was of the highest importance that Lincoln should have the support of a solid Illinois delegation to the coming Republican Convention. There were many citizens of German birth in the State. *The Chicago Staats Zeitung* was outspoken for Seward. Quietly, Lincoln founded in 1859, the *Illinois Staats Zeitung* with Theodore Canisius, an old friend, as editor. By the terms of the agreement between the two men, Canisius was bound to support

the principles of the Republican Party, but as the campaign for the nomination warmed, more and more strongly, he urged the nomination of his financial backer.

Now comes the National Republican Convention at Chicago. The *Chicago Tribune*, with Medill and Ray, is on the ground, an advantage which cannot be underestimated, since every morning the delegates were told of the excellencies of Lincoln. Moreover, Medill and Ray were active with other Lincoln managers, getting delegates for their choice, no matter how, and in spite of the warning of their principal: "Make no contracts that will bind me." Greeley is in the city, malevolently striving to effect the defeat of Seward, and careless of who gets the nomination so that his arch enemy and Weed, that enemy's manager, be beaten. Here is one move which reliable testimony ascribes to Medill. The third ballot was on, Lincoln had 231½ votes against Seward's 180. Medill whispered to Cartter, of the Ohio delegation, "If you can throw the Ohio delegation for Lincoln, Chase can have anything he wants." "H-how d-d'ye know?" Cartter stutteringly inquired. "I know," emphatically assured Medill, "and you know I wouldn't promise if I didn't know." Cartter transferred four votes and other delegates jumped for the band wagon. Seward's son was employed on the *Evening Journal*, Weed's paper in

Albany, New York. When he received a dispatch announcing Lincoln's nomination, he repeated it through the speaking tube to the printing room foreman. "Say," exclaimed the foreman, "what damn name was that you said was nominated for President?"

The bitterness of the presidential campaign of 1860 is today as clear to the reader of the press of that historic time as it was to those for whom the diatribes were intended. There were lies and innuendoes. Speeches were garbled and twisted. The Southern newspapers were vituperative of Lincoln, some of the North equally vicious. The Republican press was quite as guilty in the venomous character of its publicity as its opponents. There was no quarter; it was bludgeon against bludgeon, rapier against rapier. When the election occurred, Lincoln received the returns in the telegraph office at Springfield, fully aware of the formidable forces which were ranged against each other, the depth of the passions which were rushing toward conflict, and the onerous character of the burden he had shouldered.

The South interpreted Lincoln's election in only one way. It meant war. Lincoln in that dread hiatus between election day and inauguration kept informed of the developments by correspondence, by callers and particularly by the press. A habit of a lifetime, plus the gravity of the time and his responsibility,

caused him to read the newspapers with even greater intensity and to weigh with keener nicety of balance their editorial utterances. None knew better than he the necessity of ranging behind him and his administration as many of the newspapers of the country as possible and particularly those published in New York. The papers of Gotham had circulation not only in the city but elsewhere in the country—Greeley's weekly numbered 217,000 subscribers throughout the North and West—and were the points of contact between America and Europe; so he realized they must be won over to his views or at least neutralized to an extent as to prevent embarrassment to his government. The wide scope of his newspaper reading at that time he revealed in a letter dated November 28, 1860, to Raymond of the *Times*. He indicated gratification that the views expressed by the *Times* were substantially his own. He pointed out that the *Boston Courier* and its class held him responsible for a speech made by Senator Trumbull of Illinois, and were endeavoring to inflame the North with the belief that that speech foreshadowed an abandonment of Republican ground by the incoming administration, while the *Washington Constitution* and its class held the same speech up to the South as an open declaration of war.

The difficulties of Lincoln in that difficult time were made more intense by the human elements with which

he had to deal. There was violent, even vicious, partisanship on the part of the editors, demanded, in part, by the character of their circulations. There were deep rooted convictions. There were personal ambitions. Censorship is a weapon of war; it was used and caused irritation and resentment. Many editors knew Lincoln only casually, some only by report. Lincoln had an advantage of them, that of familiarity with their views as presented in their columns. Editors having no responsibility in government were free with advice as to how to run the government; and when that advice was disregarded, they hastened to tell of the betrayal of the government by the man in office.

What Lincoln had to contend with can best be illustrated by a portrayal of the characters of the men who directed the destinies of the greatest papers in the North. They constituted, in fact, a cross section of the ^{free} Union's editorial personnel, and their divergent views, their nagging, scolding advice, their belief in their own omniscience, and the political ignorance of Lincoln, were fairly reflective of the attitude, and views of their colleagues. Medill, of Scotch-Irish ancestry, was radical in his convictions, tenacious in his policies, active and industrious in the promotion of the affairs which concerned him, and impatient at delay. He gave the name to and he played a vital part in the creation of the Republican Party. It was he who became so emo-

tionally absorbed in Lincoln's "Lost Speech" at Bloomington, that, to his regret, he neglected to report it for the *Chicago Tribune*. It was he, who, as the ardent supporter of Lincoln, contributed so largely to his nomination as we have told. It was he who helped to organize the powerful and influential Union Defense Committee, which, during the Civil War, was the "Mainstay of the Government" in the Middle West. Yet, we find Medill critical of Lincoln's seeming hesitancy, pushing and urging him onward, berating his slowness. An intense Republican, he placed the party above Lincoln, and it was its success, not primarily Lincoln's success, which concerned him; for, as he wrote in 1863, if the party failed to carry the war to a successful conclusion, "all is lost, union, party, cause, freedom and abolition of slavery."

Greeley was a New England Yankee, tall and gawky and careless in dress, like Lincoln. Like Lincoln, too, he had been the best speller among the youth of his section. Like Lincoln, he "profoundly loved Clay." Both constitutionally and in sentiment were opposed to slavery. Greeley was an ardent reformer who would press reform to his own hurt. Lincoln was cautious until certain of the direction of public opinion. Lincoln was known as "Honest Abe"; Greeley, Lincoln described as "incorruptible." Greeley was a newspaper man who es-

said to be a politician, Lincoln a politician who could be and was a newspaper man. Greeley was willing that the Union should be "a thousand times shivered" rather than to permit slavery to be implanted on free soil. Lincoln's first concern was the preservation of the Union. Greeley regarded Lincoln as inexperienced, at Springfield caused the President-elect to call on him at his hotel, sought to direct his course in Washington, and bitterly referred to Lincoln's elevation to the White House as a "mistake." Greeley first advised: "Let the erring sisters depart in peace." Again he was for compromise. Again, he regarded Lincoln as apologetic and deprecatory towards the South, and urged him to show a strong hand. Lincoln appointed Seward Secretary of State, Seward, the man who denied Greeley office and whom Greeley beat for the Presidential nomination, which Lincoln won.

Quoted James Gordon Bennett, the founder of the *New York Herald*, was a reporter, a chronicler of events and facts, in no sense a politician or interested in politics save as a source of copy. Secretary of the Navy Welles despised him, held him to be "an editor without character whose whims are often wickedly and atrociously levelled against the best man and the best causes, regardless of honor and right." Bennett was concerned about one aspect only of the national situation, and that was the preservation of the Union.

In this, he was, of course, on all fours with Lincoln. Up to the time of Lincoln's nomination he knew nothing of the Illinoisan and cared less. He objected to him because of apprehension that the Republican Party would destroy the Union. To avert the conflict which he saw approaching, he proposed yielding to the Confederates and to all the slave holding communities their just rights as co-equal partners in the Union. Then he urged as a remedy against war the overthrow of Lincoln.

The one New York paper upon which Lincoln could rely, the one editor in that city upon whom he could depend, were the *New York Times* and Henry J. Raymond. Here again in this friendship Lincoln ran counter to Greeley. The latter looked upon Raymond as the instrument used by Seward and Weed—Raymond was named for Lieutenant Governor—to cheat him out of the Governorship of New York. Lincoln called Raymond his political Lieutenant General, was responsible for his election as Chairman of the Resolutions Committee at the Union Convention where Lincoln was renominated, and contemplated at one time, so great was his confidence, using him as Peace Ambassador to Richmond.

With these differing personalities, Lincoln was forced to deal. He hoped to win Greeley, he labored patiently to this end, but he could do no more than

minimize the harm of which Greeley was capable. He went so far as to agree to an alliance between the administration and the *Tribune*—an alliance which Greeley proposed and which temperamentally he could not and did not observe. “On to Richmond” the *New York Tribune* shrieked when the war began, and after the disaster of Bull Run, Greeley, realizing the awful consequence of his insistence of haste upon an unprepared administration, wrote to Lincoln his “midnight” letter, July 29, 1861, in which he revealed his panic, and closed: “Do the thing that is the highest right and tell me how I am to second you.” But Greeley’s temperament was such that he could not remain in this frame of mind. We find him crying for peace at any price, going so far in 1862 as to appeal to the French Minister for intervention. We find him advocating immediate emancipation, and writing “forcefully and impertinently demands for the instant liberation of the slaves as contemplated by the so-called Confiscation Act; to which Lincoln replied that his “paramount object” in everything he did and everything he abstained from doing was “to save the Union.” With the country war weary in 1864, he advised the President of the appearance of Confederate peace emissaries at Niagara Falls and urged that they be received so that no more blood would be shed. Lincoln scented a trick, but authorized Greeley

in his name to extend a safe conduct to Washington to the Confederates. Greeley failed to communicate to those agents the conditions precedent to the grant of the safe-conduct, with the result of the termination of the negotiations and charges of bad faith. The President described the incident as an "effort to inflame the peace sentiment of the North, to embarrass the administration, and to demoralize the Army," and added "in a way it was successful." We hear Greeley telling the President in this same year that he cannot be reelected, and sending an inquiry to the Governors of the States as to the desirability of a substitute nominee; for which they rebuked him; and then two months before the election, editorially declaring "We must reelect him (Lincoln), and, God helping us, we will"—a change of heart one of his biographers attributes to Lincoln's advice to Greeley that it was his intention to appoint him Postmaster General.

There was none of such meddlesomeness displayed by Bennett. Content to get the facts and print them, he published, for example, the news of the firing on Fort Sumter, without editorial comment. To gain the *Herald's* support, Lincoln sent Weed to confer with its owner. But more effective was the threat of a mob, which forced Bennett to display the flag over the Herald building. Through Henry Villard, an enterprising young syndicate reporter, who regarded him

as a Confederate sympathizer, Bennett sent word to Lincoln that the *Herald* thereafter would be unconditionally for the radical suppression of the rebellion by force of arms. He also offered his son's 160 ton sailing yacht to the government, requesting in return that the son be commissioned as a lieutenant in the revenue cutter service. Lincoln directed the acceptance of the yacht and the appointment of the younger Bennett. Two months later came the battle of Bull Run. Then the *Herald* joined heartily in the general editorial bugle call, "full of encouragement, hope, inspiration, unfaltering defiance," to quote Walt Whitman. Following Bull Run, the *Times*, *Punch* and *Spectator* of London became rapidly pro Southern. Bennett answered by denouncing the British monarchy and aristocracy, an unfortunate policy in view of the part those classes played in preventing the recognition of the Confederacy. John Bright wrote to Charles Sumner: "It is unfortunate that nothing is done to change the reckless tone of your New York *Herald*; between it and the (London) *Times*, there is great mischief done in both countries."

The Bennett collection of letters contains numerous communications to the editor from Lincoln and his wife. They reveal the President's sedulous effort to develop and maintain close relations with the directing force of the *New York Herald*. We find him,

also, writing to Bennett (September 22, 1861), regarding a pass for a gentleman as a reporter for the *Herald*: "I write this to assure you that the administration will not discriminate against the *Herald*, especially while it sustains us so generously, and the cause of the country as ably as it is doing." Again on May 21, 1862, Lincoln wrote thanking Bennett for his "able support," and correcting a false report. Colonel Alexander K. McClure, who was frequently at the White House during the war, asserted that Lincoln secured the *Herald's* backing for re-election by tendering Bennett the French Mission. Hay and Nicolay refer to a suggestion to this end from Senator Harlan. Lincoln may have conveyed an intimation of such a purpose, but it was not until February 20, 1865, that he wrote stating that he "proposed, at some convenient and not distant date," to nominate Bennett as Minister to France. Bennett declined the offer, feeling he could do more good through the *Herald* than in France.

When we microscope the relations of Lincoln with the editors of his time, we marvel anew at his patience. We see him accepting condescension without complaint, criticism without return, calumny without response. The arrows of aspersion made no dent in the shield of his spirit. The editors were necessary in order to help him save the Union,—that throughout the

war was the inescapable fact. So, without resentment, he permitted unchallenged the impatience of his friend Medill, with calmness and persistence, he used the lure of self-interest to gain Bennett, and, to thin the vaporings of Greeley, he constantly turned the other cheek. What he did in the case of these men he did in the case of others of their profession and as a result he gained sufficient press support to help him achieve the dominant purpose of his life—a reunited country.

An assassin's bullet killed Lincoln. It is fitting to close our review of his work with the press, which, be it remembered, he served as correspondent, editorial writer and owner, by quoting the eulogy of the journalist who constantly scolded, nagged, meddled and conspired against him—Greeley:

“The Republic needed to be cast through chastening, purifying fires of adversity; so these came, and already their work and the verdure of a new national life springs greenly from their ashes. . . . Looking back through the mists of seven eventful, tragic, trying, years, I clearly discern that the one providential leader, the indispensable hero of the great drama, faithfully reflecting even in his hesitations and seeming vacillations the sentiment of the masses; fitted by his very defects and shortcomings for the burden laid upon him, the good to be wrought out through him, was Abraham Lincoln.”

Mr. Hay Introducing Mr. Nevins

FELLOW CITIZENS:

During the twenty-four years of Lincoln's residence in this county its people were predominantly of Southern birth. They were visiting every part of the South and people from every part of the South were visiting among them. Lincoln was thus brought into contact with every shade of opinion in the South in regard to slavery and the right of secession. He knew personally Southern men and Southern women, who, for years after the end of the war, were to argue with bitterness for the right of the lost cause. He knew that the problem of restoring proper relations between the North and the South, after the Civil War should be ended, was the problem of bringing about kindly feeling upon the part of the people of the South toward the people of the North. He knew that kindly feeling cannot be won by forcible means. That was the message of the Second Inaugural. It took twelve years of bitter experience to convince the politicians of the North that Lincoln knew what he was talking about when he wrote the Second Inaugural.

He regarded the nation's problem at the end of the war as the problem of the voluntary reunion of the South with the North, rather than the problem of the forcible reconstruction of the South by the North. Appropriately, therefore, our second speaker of the day gave to his paper the title "Lincoln's Plans for Reunion" rather than "Lincoln's Plans for Reconstruction."

Allan Nevins is a native of Illinois, born at Camp Point near Quincy. He obtained his Master's degree at the University of Illinois. His first newspaper job was that of a reporter on the *Illinois State Register* during a summer's vacation of his college course. Since then he has taught at the University of Illinois, at Cornell and at Columbia. He has been an editorial writer upon *The Nation*, the *New York Evening Post* and the *New York World*. He is the author of historical works which have given him a standing in the historical world and have caused him to be selected as editor-in-chief of a series of works upon American history which is in course of publication by Dodd, Mead and Company. He is now professor of history in Columbia University and an editorial writer upon the *New York World*. His fascinating book, "Fremont, Trail Blazer of the West," led us to select him as our second speaker today. His subject is "Lincoln's Plans for Reunion." Mr. Nevins.

Lincoln's Plans for Reunion

BY ALLAN NEVINS

Lincoln's Plans for Reunion

AS THE Civil War and the Reconstruction Era recede into the past, and the passions and prejudices which they bred are forgotten, many of the old historical verdicts upon this bitter period have been sharply reversed. A more critical and objective attention has been concentrated upon the years just after the war. Book after book has appeared upon Reconstruction and upon Andrew Johnson and his leading contemporaries. They have sharply emphasized the darker truths as to the speculation and corruption at the North, the tyranny and misgovernment at the South, and the shoddy character of much of our national life. There is reason to think that the reaction against the older judgments has sometimes gone too far, and that the difficulties of the Reconstruction problem and the sincerity of the great majority of Northern leaders have been underestimated. But in some salient respects the Reconstruction era was undeniably a "tragic era"; an era less of reconstruction than of destruction, not so much of reunion as of increased disunion. The sectional an-

tagonism between North and South was a prolongation of the civil conflict which we now recognize to have been deplorable. To all who survey the period, and particularly the sorry history of the South under its carpetbag misrule, there must occur the question, Could it not have been prevented? If Lincoln had lived to complete his second term, might not the worst of the bickering and ruin have been averted, and the records of both South and North been more peaceful, cordial, and prosperous?

It is futile to guess at what might have been had Lincoln survived. But it may be profitable to examine Lincoln's plans for the future as they had taken partial shape when he was assassinated, and to draw from them certain evident lessons. We all know something of the spirit in which Lincoln was approaching the task of Reconstruction. Everyone is familiar with his sublime words as the war closed: "With malice toward none, with charity for all. . . ." Nearly everyone knows also that he had laid down the beginnings of a practical Reconstruction plan, which had been applied during the war to several States. Its details remained to be worked out; Lincoln confessed that he did not know how it would be developed. But it is worth while to look both at this practical plan of Reconstruction, and at the large policy to which Lincoln had committed himself, and to analyze their

principal elements. No one can study his speeches and acts during the war without perceiving that he had a fundamental conception of the common future of North and South from which his Reconstruction plan naturally flowed. No one can fail to see that the broad policy of Lincoln was in striking contrast with the policy later adopted by the radical majority in Congress.

What was Lincoln's underlying policy? In a sentence, it was the policy of restoring not merely the old political union of North and South, but the old spiritual union, the old social union, the union of hearts. The word Union may be interpreted in various ways. There is a sense in which the conqueror and conquered find union; a union like that in which England held Ireland and Austria held the Croats. But Lincoln's idea of union was broader, finer, and more humane. He cherished the ideal of a Union of brothers, politically equal and loyally devoted to the same central government. If we examine his words on Union, we find that they all illustrate this ideal.¹ If we look at the Reconstruction plan which he employed in or-

¹One of Lincoln's characteristic appeals to love of Union occurs in his Chicago speech of July 7, 1858, and its closing sentence is an anticipation of the closing paragraph of his first inaugural address: "That is the electric cord in that Declaration that links the hearts of patriotic and liberty-loving men together, that will link those patriotic hearts as long as the love of freedom exists in the minds of men throughout the world."

ganizing his new State governments in Louisiana and Arkansas in 1863-64, we find that it applies this ideal. If we read his last speech, the address of April 11, 1865, which he devoted entirely to the question of Reconstruction, we find that it emphasizes this ideal. His belief in the necessity of a Union of hands and not of mere laws was the basis of all his practical acts. To his radical opponents at the North it seemed a soft-hearted and weak policy. We, with our better perspective, can see that it was the one really wise and enduring policy, and that it showed not merely his greatness of heart but his shrewdness of mind and sureness of vision.

If we ask what were Lincoln's motives in adopting this policy, the answer cannot be briefly given. One motive is not easily overemphasized. When we think of his words, "with malice toward none, with charity for all," we think of them as an expression of his inborn kindliness. Reflecting upon his lifelong tolerance and gentleness, we assume that, slow to smite and swift to spare, he was incapable of acting with a Cromwellian vindictiveness; and this is true. We assume also that this mildness is part of a great American tradition. It did not accord with the spirit of the republic that our leaders should show the blood lust of Sulla or the iron harshness of Bismarck—it did not harmonize with the principles of Washington and

Jefferson. Our national traditions were of peace and clemency. But while all this is valid, it does not fully explain Lincoln's course. There have been mild leaders who showed a good deal more severity in making peace than Lincoln did. The American tradition was not sufficient to stay the hand of Thaddeus Stevens.

We must look further for some of Lincoln's motives; and one of them lay in the ideas of Union which birth and environment had implanted in him. The facts of his parentage and upbringing gave him a conception of the Union entirely different from that which men were likely to hold in Boston or Charleston. He was a son of the West at a time when it was not so much a section as a common denominator of sections. As he came to maturity the streams of Northern and Southern migration to the West were eddying and mingling all about him. Because North and South fused on the Illinois prairies, Illinois was one of the few parts of the country where the Lincoln-Douglas debates, in the form they assumed, could ever have been held. The result was that mere sectionalism counted for little with Lincoln. He thought of himself as a Westerner who had Southern blood and kinsmen while he held Northern ideas and convictions. He asserted Northern principles, but he also proudly asserted his Kentucky birth. A citizen of the Union, far more than Jackson he rose above sectional an-

tagonisms and rejected any sectional allegiance of an exclusive sort. His ideas of democracy reinforced this view. In his opinion no man had rights superior to another; no State was better than another; no section was better than its neighbors. Emerson, when a promising lad of Boston was slain in the Civil War, wrote bitterly in his journal that this one life was worth more than the lives of a hundred South Carolinians.² Such a statement would have been deeply repugnant to Lincoln's belief in the equal rights and the equal dignity of all Americans.

But above all, he was actuated in his policy by his far-sighted view of the future. He knew that the American people would have to live with each other. When North and South sprang to war in 1861, many declared that any real reunion would now be impossible. The *New York Tribune*, which had done so much to bring on the conflict, asserted that even if the South could be defeated it could not be knit into an organic whole with the North again. The nation, it said, cannot be pinned together with bayonets.³ Lincoln knew better than Greeley what bayonets could and could not do. He knew something of the capacity of an Anglo-Saxon people, if wisely led, for crying

² Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Journals*, Volume X.

³ "One or two States may be coerced; but not an entire section or quarter of the Union." *New York Tribune*, December 8, 1860.

quits and acting as Robert E. Lee did when he mounted his horse Traveller and rode home to be a patriotic American citizen. But while others forgot that bayonets could perform only half the task, Lincoln never did. The bayonets could remove the physical obstacles to reunion; but it required a wise policy to do the rest. During the war he said very little about military victory, while he said a great deal about restoring the Union. At the height of the struggle he declared:

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be to "the Union as it was." . . . My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union.⁴

He never said, as another leader might have done, that his paramount object was to defeat the South. He was looking forward not only to the surrender of the Confederate armies, but to the long years afterwards—to 1866, to 1870, to 1880. It was because he saw the problem as a whole, in the perspective of the decades to come, that he kept his serenity, never yielded to the passion or resentment of the moment, and always remembered that a genuine reunion, a reunion of wills and ideals, must be attained.

So much for the motives of Lincoln's policy; what

⁴Lincoln's letter to Greeley, *New York Tribune*, August 25, 1862.

now of the origins of that policy? We should expect its beginnings to reach back to an early moment in his preoccupation with the sectional struggle, and this is true. It is one of the hallmarks of Lincoln's wisdom that it is always based on simple and inevitable processes of logic. He thought aright on Reconstruction in the Civil War years because he had begun thinking aright on the general problem long before. We find that the reconstruction of Southern society was engaging his attention as early as 1854. That is, even then he had been thinking carefully upon the problem of the ultimate disposition of the negro, and the relation between the negroes and the Southern whites, which were always the two central problems of social reconstruction. His ideas were simple, and they called for a generous and fraternal solution.

One school of Northern thought cared nothing for the white people of the South. Free the negroes, urged the Abolitionists; strike off their shackles; let the South make the best of the resulting situation, without help or sympathy. Lincoln knew that such a summary proposal was neither practical nor conducive to true union. "If all earthly power were given me," he said at Peoria in 1854,⁵ "I should not know what to do as to the existing institution." He admitted that the scheme of colonization was for at least the present

⁵ *Lincoln's Complete Works*, Nicolay and Hay, 1894, Volume 1, 187.

impracticable; there were not ships nor funds enough to carry the negroes back to Africa. "What then?" he asked. "Free them and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? I think I would not hold one in slavery at any rate, yet the point is not clear enough to me to denounce people upon. What next? Free them and make them socially and politically our equals? My own feelings will not admit of this, and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of whites would not. Whether this feeling accords with justice and sound judgment is not the sole question, if indeed any part of it. A universal feeling, whether well or ill founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot make them equals. It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted, but for their tardiness in this I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the South."

In this famous Peoria speech of 1854 we may discern the germ of Lincoln's philosophy of reunion and reconstruction as it developed after the war began. One main idea ribbed this philosophy. First and always, he clung to the idea of fraternity between the white Northerners and white Southerners. He was solicitous regarding the feelings of the Southern people; even if they were wrong, their convictions must be taken into account. "A universal feeling, whether ill

or well founded, cannot be safely disregarded." Subsidiary to this, his solicitude for both races forbade him to hurry the negro into a false position. He rejected the proposal to elevate the slaves suddenly to a level where they would be "politically and socially our equals." He believed in making them economically equal. The black man, he said more than once, is my equal and the equal of all others in his natural right to eat the bread he earns with his own hands. He believed in equal civil rights, and in social justice for the negro. But in other respects he declared bluntly, twelve years before Northern extremists began to press for the Fifteenth Amendment, that "we cannot make them equals." He meant that it was impossible, by mere strokes of the pen, to make the mass of Southerners—or for that matter Northerners—accept them at once in that status, and that it would be cruelty rather than kindness to make them premature claimants for full equality. These opinions which Lincoln voiced at Peoria were never changed.

The conflict over slavery grew more heated, but Lincoln still refused to abandon his belief in sectional fraternity. Where, if we study his speeches and writings between 1854 and 1860, is there a taunt to the South, or a defiance of it, or even an angry reproach addressed to the Southern slaveholders? Nearly every other free-soil leader uttered stinging words. It would

be possible to compile a dismaying dictionary of sectional abuse from the speeches of Seward, Sumner, Chase, Greeley, and Schurz, as from those of leading Southerners. Sumner, for all his Harvard education and European polish, spoke like a Strepsiades. He said that it was impossible for a defender of slavery to be a gentleman, and that the South Carolinians were men of "shameful imbecility." Seward spoke of the slaveholders' "tyranny," their "chicanery," their "conspiracies to corrupt justice." Greeley characterized the "slavebreeders" and "slavedrivers" as depraved, brutish, and lawless. Even the grave poet-editor, William Cullen Bryant, the fine exemplar of Eastern culture and literary genius, assailed the "insolvent slaveholders," the "ruffians," the "oppressors" of the South. They believed, he said, that the destiny of this proud republic was "to breed slaves and hunt runaway human cattle." Yet never by a single word did Lincoln surrender to the vehemence of the time. He attacked slavery with unrelenting vigor, saying that it was founded "in the selfishness of man's nature;" but he never attacked the slaveholders. Instead, he called upon North and South to join hands in dealing with the problem. As he put it at Peoria:

"Let North and South—let all Americans—let all lovers of liberty everywhere join in this great and good work. If we do this, we shall not only have saved

the Union, but we shall have so saved it as to make and to keep it forever worthy of the saving. We shall have so saved it that the succeeding millions of free happy people, the world over, shall rise up and call us blessed to the latest generation.”⁶

He never attacked even the small groups of slave-breeders and slave-traders. In his letter to Joshua Speed he remarked that the Southerners themselves held these groups in odium and contempt, but he did not say that he held them in any such estimation. Upon issues and occasions that gave every other Northern free-soiler an opportunity for scathing epithets, he never abandoned his conciliatory tone. He mentioned the evil of miscegenation, which by 1850 had produced no fewer than 405,751 mulattoes; but he never uttered a reproach. He mentioned the evil of the revived slave-trade with Africa, encouraged by South Carolina, but with not a word of denunciation for those who abetted it. He discussed the Fugitive Slave Act, but without any of the common sneers at “slave-catchers.” He wrote of Preston Brooks’s assault upon Sumner, but with no personal condemnation whatever. Was his mildness assumed for political expediency? He refrained from abuse in years when he had no hope of becoming President—when he laughed to Henry Villard over the idea of “such a

⁶ *Ibidem*, I, 203, 204.

Sucker as I" being nominated for the office—and when it would have seemed to his political advantage to wax angry and aggressive. He did it because love of a fraternal Union was bred into his whole being, and he wished to do nothing to injure it.

Had all, North and South, possessed half the moderation of Lincoln, the war might have been averted. The two sections had sprung from common stocks; they held many of the same ideals; they could look back to the Revolutionary days when Massachusetts and Virginia had fought side by side, and Ellsworth and Madison, Franklin and Pinckney, had united in making our Constitution. As we regard the States' eighty-odd years of common history, it seems that the war should have been avoided. Yet little by little the estrangement grew too great. The North, hurried, restless, devoted to industry, building up great cities, looked to material progress. The South, leisurely, dignified, attached to the life of farm and plantation, clung to ways of the past. In the Northern air was the whirl of machinery, the shriek of the factory and locomotive whistle. The South, with its agricultural system founded on slavery, felt sharply its economic limitations, and pressed steadily for greater room. The North grew impatient of State Rights and demanded that a centralized government help it to more efficiency and wealth. The South stood for individual-

ism and the sovereignty of its well-loved States.⁷ With some truth, the South taunted the North for its sordid love of money, its ugly slums, its shopkeeping aims. With some truth also, the North taunted the South for its slave auctions, its overseers' lash, its defence of an institution that was an ugly anachronism. High feelings led to high words. As the West was opened up, the two sides flung themselves into a contest for its control, and when the North won, the Southern States declared they would no longer live with their Northern sisters. Some abruptly, some hesitatingly, but all proudly, they seceded. As they departed, Lincoln made a last appeal:

We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

We have sketched the background of Lincoln's policy of Reconstruction; now what was the manner in which that policy unfolded during his Presidency? The governing conception always remained the simple but grand idea that there must be a reunion of hearts, not merely a forced political reunion. War year fol-

⁷ Cf. Gamaliel Bradford, *Confederate Portraits*, 249, 250.

lowed war year, and as death filled the land, hatred rose higher and higher. Yet he never ceased to believe that the Union could be quickly restored as a Union of affection and comradeship, and that conciliatory methods should be employed to attain that goal.

One reason why he held this belief that fraternal reunion would be easy should be emphasized. From the outset he felt convinced that a decided majority of the Southern people were but temporarily misled. He believed that in most States secession had been brought about by a small but aggressive faction. In his message of July 4, 1861, he declared that in all the South except perhaps South Carolina the men who were inveterately disloyal were a decided minority.⁸ Believing this, he thought that once this minority was defeated, conciliation should be easy and the Union should repair itself without painful delay. He did not know, any more than Burke, how to draw up an indictment against a whole people. Whether this so-called "conspiracy theory" of secession was valid is a question upon which historians will always dispute. It is undoubtedly true that secession sentiment, while powerful in the cotton States of the Lower South, diminished in intensity as one went northward, and that in Tennessee and North Carolina

⁸ This is discussed by James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States From the Compromise of 1850*, III, 405-408.

great bodies of citizens remained staunchly loyal despite the pressure and terror of war itself. It is true, on the other hand, that once the war began the great majority of Southerners ardently supported the secession cause. But the important fact is that Lincoln held this conspiracy theory; that he believed a majority of the Southern people had been at heart loyal. He was confident that there were few utter irreconcilables, and that most Southerners would be ready, when defeat came, to let the past bury the past and accept the old flag without reservations.

It must also be emphasized that this view was from the first stoutly combated by the radical wing of Republicans. Thaddeus Stevens waged war not against a minority, but a whole section. To him and his associates the whole Southern population was a generation of vipers. He and his friends, Henry Winter Davis, Ben Wade, Owen Lovejoy, held that since nearly all Southerners were hostile, conciliation would be futile. They believed that for an indefinite period a Union of force would be the only safe Union, and they wished force without limit. Extermination is a terrible word in any war, but doubly terrible in a war of Americans against Americans. Yet these men used it not once, but repeatedly. It would be necessary, said Owen Lovejoy, "to annihilate these rebels, to extirpate them, and repeople those States with a loyal

population.”⁹ Thaddeus Stevens at the beginning of 1863 declared for depopulating the South. The Republican party, he said, will yet “come to the conclusion that the adoption of the measures I advocated at the outset of this war, the arming of the negroes, the slaves of the rebels, is the only way left on earth in which these rebels can be exterminated. They will find that they must treat these States now outside the Union as conquered provinces, and settle them with new men, and drive the rebels as exiles from this country; for I tell you they have the pluck and endurance for which I gave them credit a year and a half ago. . . . They have such determination, energy, and endurance that nothing but actual extermination or exile or starvation will ever induce them to surrender to this government.” In this doctrine of extermination, he added, he was far ahead of his party. “But the party had always in the past caught up with him, and he predicted now that it would overtake and outstrip him “before this infamous and bloody rebellion is ended.”¹⁰

Lincoln's practical plan of Reconstruction was simple. It is clear that his doctrine that most Southerners were but temporarily astray and would return

⁹ January 8, 1863; *Congressional Globe*, Thirty-seventh Congress, third session, 243, 244.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

wholeheartedly to their old allegiance was not merely the generous view, but a view which made restoration of the States easy. Though he never quite said so, he undoubtedly believed the Southern States to be still in the Union. It was necessary only to revive their loyalty. In his message to Congress on December 8, 1863, and the accompanying proclamation, Lincoln promised amnesty to all participants in the rebellion, with certain exceptions, who should swear to support the Constitution and the Union and to accept the existing legislation and decrees regarding slavery. He also declared that whenever a number of voters equalling one tenth of those who had participated in the Presidential election of 1860 should come forward and reestablish a State government under the Union, it would be recognized as the true government of the State and would receive the benefits of the Constitutional guaranty. It might not be given representation in Congress, for that, as Lincoln stated, would be for Congress to determine. But he plainly implied that he would do his best to have the State, when thus reorganized, granted representation. This, in brief, was Lincoln's plan of Reconstruction, and he clung to its easy conditions until the day of his death.

It should be pointed out that his application of this plan had two principal results, each highly beneficial. First, before the war ended three States were given

new and loyal governments. The President seized the first opportunity to send agents to Tennessee, Louisiana, and Arkansas. All three of these States were politically reorganized while the fighting still raged within or near their borders. A loyal government was erected in Louisiana in February, 1863, and with a vote of 11,411 in seventeen parishes, Michael Hahn was chosen governor. In Arkansas a similar government was erected in March, 1864, and with a vote of 12,430 in more than forty counties, Isaac Murphy was elected governor. In Tennessee a loyal State government was erected in February, 1865, and in March William G. Brownlow was chosen governor by more than 23,000 votes. These were the encouraging first-fruits of Reconstruction.¹¹

In the second place, by the pressure of this plan Lincoln compelled Congress to adopt a milder Reconstruction scheme, as a beginning, than its extremists would otherwise have tolerated. The radical leaders in the House were hostile to Lincoln's proposals. Denouncing them violently, they hastened to agree upon their own alternative. This first Congressional plan has come down to us as the Wade-Davis bill, but it was Henry Winter Davis alone who led in its advocacy. A native Marylander,

¹¹ Charles H. McCarthy, *Lincoln's Plan of Reconstruction*, chapters 1, 2, and 3.

a former Whig distinguished by his bitter anti-slavery views, a man of handsome face and bearing, Davis was heard with the more attention because he came from a slave State. He had nothing but scorn for the President's "ten-per-cent" governments.¹² How could a secure State government rest on a frail minority of one tenth its voters, and how could it be trusted when it required of former Confederates nothing but a general oath of allegiance to the Constitution? But the plan which he brought forward in behalf of the Congressional majority was not really harsh; it was so mild that Thaddeus Stevens sharply condemned it. It carried no hint of negro suffrage, it set up no military governments, it guaranteed a full and easy return to the Union, and it granted the President a definite part in the political reconstruction of the States.

This surprisingly mild scheme of Congressional reconstruction, as passed in the early summer of 1864, authorized Lincoln to appoint a provisional governor in every State of the South. This governor, when military resistance had ended, was to enroll all white male citizens; and when a majority had taken the oath of allegiance, they were to elect a Constitutional Convention. This body was to amend the Constitution

¹² *Congressional Globe*, Thirty-eighth Congress, first session, Part 4, Appendix, 82.

by prohibiting slavery; by repudiating the Confederate debt; and by depriving the higher Confederate officers, civil and military, of the right to vote or to hold office. When the new Constitution had been ratified by the voters, the State would resume its place in the Union and send its Senators and Representatives to Congress. It is clear that this Reconstruction plan went beyond Lincoln's at three points. It demanded a majority of the voters instead of ten per cent; it required complete guarantees as to the extinction of slavery and the rebel debt; and it debarred the higher Confederate officers from the government. But it fell far short of the Congressional Reconstruction of 1867, with its basis of full negro suffrage, drastic rebel disfranchisement, and stern military control. Thad Stevens denounced it because it surrendered "the rights of conquest," "the full rights of war."¹³

It was an achievement to commit Congress to a plan which, in most practical essentials, was so conservative. By moving promptly Lincoln had compelled Congress to act before the victorious end of the war made that body harsh and arrogant; by acting mildly, he had set an example which forbade Congress to go too far. The radical Republicans of both houses in 1864 were intensely hostile to the Presi-

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 2041.

dent. But the brilliant and erratic Ignatius Donnelly, a Representative of Minnesota, explained frankly why his fellow-radicals did not dare to go far in opposing Lincoln. In the debate on the Wade-Davis Bill he acknowledged that Lincoln had a tremendous hold on the affections of the North, and that Congressmen must think twice before they crossed swords with him:¹⁴

I recognize [said Donnelly] that popularity which accompanies him, and which, considering the ordeal through which he has passed, is little less than miraculous. I recognize that unquestioning faith in his honesty and ability which pervades all classes, and the sincere affection with which almost the entire population regard him. We must not underrate him even in our praises. He is a great man. Great not after the old models of the world, but with a homely and original greatness. He will stand out to future ages in the history of these crowded and confused times with wonderful distinctness. He has carried a vast and discordant population safely and peacefully through the greatest of political revolutions with such consummate skill that while he led he appeared to follow; while he innovated beyond all precedent, he has been denounced as tardy; while he struck the shackles from the limbs of three million slaves, he has been hailed as conservative. If to adapt, persistently and courageously, just and righteous principles to all the

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 2038.

perplexed windings and changes of human events, and to secure in the end the complete triumph of these principles, be statesmanship, then Abraham Lincoln is the first of statesmen.

Lincoln laid the Wade-Davis bill aside, letting it fail for want of his signature. He did not object to it because it was too harsh, though it was harsher than he liked. He rejected it because he wished to keep Reconstruction in his own hands, and because he was unwilling to assent to two of its postulates. In the first place, the Congressional bill asserted that the Confederate States were no longer in the Union, and this seemed to Lincoln a fatal admission that States might really secede. In the second place, the bill prohibited slavery in the reconstructed States, and Lincoln had always denied that Congress had any right to interfere with slavery within a State. He was wise in rejecting the bill, and wisely tactful in his method of doing so.

His devoted secretaries, Nicolay and Hay, have sketched the scene.¹⁵ Congress was to adjourn on the Fourth of July, 1864. The President was in his room at the Capitol, signing bills. This fateful Reconstruction bill was laid before him; he pushed it away and went on signing other measures. Members of Congress

¹⁵ Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, Volume IX, 120-122.

entered in intense anxiety over the fate of the bill. There was Sumner, tall, pompous, scarred by his anti-slavery battle; Boutwell, thin, nervous, intense; Zack Chandler, bustling and arrogant, who thrust himself on the President's attention and asked him if he would sign the bill. Lincoln replied, "This bill has been placed before me a few moments before Congress adjourns. It is a matter of too much importance to be swallowed in this way." Chandler warmly expostulated; to veto the bill, he said, "will damage us fearfully in the Northwest." The President silenced him with a few quiet words. A few minutes later Lincoln was entering his carriage to go home. Someone remarked that the threats of the radical Congressmen had little substance, and that the people in November would not desert him on the question at issue. But Lincoln knew that it was a grave decision, and answered in words almost as fine as any he ever spoke: "If they choose to make a point upon this, I do not doubt that they can do harm. They have never been friendly to me. At all events, I must have some consciousness of being somewhere near right. I must keep some standard or principle fixed within myself."

So far as our evidence of the popular response goes, it supported the President in his stand. When he issued his explanatory proclamation of July 8, declaring that while he could not sign this bill he by no

means disapproved of the Congressional plan of Reconstruction, and would give executive assistance to any Southern State which embraced it, the press approved his position. Even Greeley's *Tribune* was cordial. The radicals knew that his proclamation meant little, for the South, when reconquered, would prefer the easier alternative of the Presidential plan. They were in a fever of indignation. Henry Winter Davis and Ben Wade issued on August 8 an angry denunciation of the pocket veto, accusing Lincoln of "dictatorial usurpations," asserting that "a more studied outrage upon the legislative authority of the people has never been perpetrated," and saying that Congress must curb his encroachments. But the people had quietly accepted the President's action. The Maryland Republicans ostentatiously denied Henry Winter Davis a renomination for Congress, and that fall Lincoln was reelected by the vote of twenty-two States out of twenty-five.

Meanwhile, Lincoln had not forgotten his underlying purpose—to reconstruct a nation of brothers, to restore a union of hearts. It was clear by the end of 1864 that the North could dictate what terms it would to the South. Sherman had captured Atlanta; Farra-
gut had fought his way into Mobile Bay; Hood's army had been annihilated at the battle of Nashville. While Grant pounded away at Lee, Sherman swept

through Georgia and made Savannah a Christmas present to the nation. But the dictation of terms was never in the President's mind; he felt no desire to glut a Northern vengeance on the prostrate South. With the Confederacy at the point of collapse, he devoted much of his message of December 6, 1864, to an outline of his mild and paternal conditions of peace. Jefferson Davis, he said, could not voluntarily reaccept the Union, but the followers of Jefferson Davis could. They could have peace at any time by simply laying down their arms and submitting to the national authority. "After so much, the Government could not, if it would, maintain war against them. The loyal people would not sustain or allow it. If questions should remain, we would adjust them by the peaceful means of legislation, conference, courts, and votes, operating only in constitutional and lawful channels." So far as the Presidential authority extended, he promised them that he would act in the generous temper of his proclamation of pardon and amnesty for all returning Southerners.

The sober, kindly language of this last annual message is less well known than the deathless words of the second inaugural address—"with malice toward none, with charity for all;" yet its liberality and elevation are no less remarkable. It was the proffer not merely of peace but of a brotherly hand, of restora-

tion to the old relations of amity and trust. But it was to be followed by a far more striking expression of Lincoln's kindly wisdom. On February 5, 1865, occurred one of the strangest incidents of the war. With the Confederacy plainly stumbling to its doom, and the situation one in which a hard ruler need only wait for total and abject surrender, Lincoln called his Cabinet together.¹⁶ At this night meeting he said that he had an unusual proposal to make. Thereupon he read the draft of a proposed message to Congress and a proposed proclamation to the people. In his tentative message he recommended that Congress should adopt a joint resolution empowering the President to pay four hundred million dollars to the States of the South in proportion to their slave populations, in return for the laying down of their arms and the acceptance of the Constitutional amendment abolishing slavery. The supplementary proclamation announced to the American people that when the Southern States had ceased their resistance and ratified the Thirteenth Amendment, the four hundred million dollars would be paid to them, all political offences would be pardoned, all property except slaves would be released from confiscation, and "liberality will be recommended to Congress upon all points not lying within Executive control."

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, Volume X, 133-137.

There are not many scenes in our history stranger than this, nor many more sublime. Here was the ruler of an embattled nation, in the hour of victory, thinking not of the triumph of his armies and cause, but of how he could sweeten the bitter cup of his foe's humiliation, and reconcile them to friendship with their conquerors. Here was the extreme of magnanimity toward a defeated adversary. Lincoln knew that the Southerners, with all their errors and hostility, were still Americans, kinsmen of the same blood, a people with the same past as the rest of the republic, and it was to be hoped with the same future. If there were again to be a real Union, hatred and fear must be uprooted and concord and trust planted in their stead. As it had been when Carolinians and New Yorkers fought together in the Revolution and Mississippians and Illinoisans in the war with Mexico, so it must be in times to come. The joint resolution for the Thirteenth Amendment had passed Congress six days earlier, on January 31st; Lincoln's own State, Illinois, had been the first to ratify, on February 1; he hoped now to secure Southern adherence to it. He argued with his Cabinet that to spend the four hundred millions would be to spend only the cost of two hundred days of war; but two hundred days of war would mean the loss of many lives, the bereavement of many homes, and the intensification of sectional

hatred, while the termination of the war by this generous stroke would mean an end of bloodshed, a period to antagonism, a long step toward the old fraternal Union of the past.

But in this proposal Lincoln was far in advance of either North or South. In Richmond, Jefferson Davis was still talking defiantly of the "two countries," and proclaiming that he would die in the last trench for independence. In Washington, the President's own Cabinet was dubious of his plan, while it was certain that Congress would be firmly opposed. Gideon Welles wrote in his *Diary*¹⁷ that "the earnest desire of the President to conciliate and effect peace was manifest, but there may be such a thing as so overdoing as to cause a distrust or adverse feeling. In the present temper of Congress the proposed measure, if a wise one, could not be carried through successfully; I do not think the scheme could accomplish any good results." The President regretfully dropped his plan; with a deep sigh, as Secretary Usher tells us, he declared, "But you are all opposed to me, and I will not send the message."¹⁸ He folded up the paper and laid aside what his secretaries believed to be the project nearest his heart. But they believed also that, laying it aside only temporarily, he looked forward

¹⁷ *Diary of Gideon Welles*, II, 237.

¹⁸ *New York Tribune*, September 13, 1885.

to a not distant day, after the beginning of his new term, when the Cabinet might respond more warmly to his own generous and far-sighted impulses.

With Lincoln in this mood, the war drew to an end. On February 20, 1865, Lincoln in writing to Governor Fletcher of Missouri, urged a simple, homely plan to reconcile the Unionists and the Secessionists in the border States and the South. They should reason together and promise mutual forbearance, he wrote:

Each leaving all others alone solves the problem, and surely each would do this but for his apprehension that others will not leave him alone. Cannot this mischievous distrust be removed? Let neighborhood meetings be everywhere called and held, of all entertaining a sincere desire for mutual security in the future, whatever they may heretofore have thought, said, or done about the war or about anything else. Let all such meet and, waiving all else, pledge each to cease harassing others and to make common cause against whoever persists in making, aiding, or encouraging further disturbance. . . . At such meetings old friendships will cross the memory, and honor and Christian charity will come in to help.

How practical this advice was, how easy to follow, and how certain in many instances to bring about a really "lasting peace" in the local community! It involved no pressure of armed forces and no drastic

national compulsions, but simply the exercise of a spirit of fraternity. A fortnight later the second inaugural address, imbued with deep religious feeling and free from a single word of sectional irritation, was uttered. Lincoln asserted that the war might be regarded as a just compensation of God's for the crying offense of slavery; but he also specifically declared that this retribution was visited upon North and South alike, implying that both sections were guilty—as historically they were. He appealed against malice and in behalf of charity. But while writing these words, Lincoln was busy giving their spirit a practical application. The problem of Reconstruction, as the Northern armies overran the South, was pressing upon the government more and more urgently; and as it became urgent the President showed a firm determination to adhere to his simple and mild plan of Presidential Reconstruction.

As the year 1865 opened, two of Lincoln's reconstructed governments were in operation in Louisiana and Arkansas, and the third was about to be erected in Tennessee. These governments had been harshly assailed in Congress, and there was some valid ground for criticism. In Louisiana, for example, the prominent part played by General Banks in setting up the new government, the fraudulent registration which preceded the election, the use of the floating popula-

tion of New Orleans at the polls, and the failure of most reputable people to accept amnesty, cast discredit upon the reconstructed system. There was a certain reason in calling it a government of camp-followers and loafers mixed with a few really estimable and loyal Southerners. But Lincoln stood by it as a beginning which, however disappointing, was better than nothing.

When two military commanders in Louisiana, Generals Hurlbut and Canby, showed a cavalier disregard for the new government, he sharply rebuked them.¹⁹ The people back of this government, he informed General Hurlbut, had made a constitution that was better for the poor black man than that of Illinois. He believed "that with such a nucleus around which to build we could get the State into position again sooner than otherwise." As he wrote to General Canby, there was certainly no object in getting up a piece of machinery merely to pay salaries. "But it is a worthy object to again get Louisiana into proper practical relations with the nation, and we can never finish this if we can never begin it. Much good work is already begun, and surely nothing can be gained by throwing it away."

¹⁹ Lincoln's letter to General Hurlbut was dated November 14, 1864; to General Canby, December 12, 1864. Complete Works, Nicolay and Hay, 1894, Volume II, 597ff., 616ff.

He was ready to fight for his moderate and liberal plan, and he demonstrated the fact by launching a studied appeal to the public opinion of the North. It is one of the advantages of the Presidential office that its holder has unequalled opportunities for gaining the ear of the public, and no man was more sagacious in using this opportunity than Lincoln. He had a battle on his hands if his policy of fraternal reunion was ever to be carried out. He realized that it would be a battle on two fronts, one front facing the vindictive Northerners led by Thad Stevens and Charles Sumner, the other front facing the irreconcilable Southerners of the type of Jefferson Davis. How should he wage this two-sided contest? The logical course was to issue appeals to the reasonable men in each camp, alternately to the North and South, striving to rally the moderates of both sections about his banner. He would begin with an appeal to the North, and shortly follow it with an appeal to the South. It is evident that this determination was taking shape in his mind as Lee's army was being forced to its surrender at Appomattox; and in those days of Northern relief and gladness he wrote out his initial argument. On the evening of April 11 the citizens of Washington held a demonstration to celebrate Lee's capitulation, and proceeding to the White House, called Lincoln to the balcony. He spoke to them, and over their

heads to the whole North, in his last great appeal to reason. He referred to the attacks on the Louisiana Government:

The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relations with the Union sooner by sustaining or discarding her new government? Some twelve thousand voters in the hitherto slave State of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State, held elections, organized a State government, adopted a free State Constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowered the legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. . . .

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We, in effect, say to the white man: You are worthless or worse; we will neither help you nor be helped by you. To the blacks we say: This cup of liberty which these, your old masters, hold to your lips we will dash from you, and leave you to the chance of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined way, when, where, and how. . . . Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only to what it should be as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it.

He was ready to follow this with his appeal to the fair-minded element in the South. "It may be my

duty," he said in this last speech, "to make some new announcement to the people of the South." His secretaries tell us that he was pondering this new announcement. Can anyone doubt, they ask, that it "would again have embraced and combined justice to the blacks and generosity to the whites of the South, with union and liberty for the whole country?"²⁰ But before he could issue his new statement he lay cold in death.

It can only be conjectured, as we have said, just what would have been the ultimate details of Lincoln's Reconstruction plan. He had hitherto acted under his war powers; after Appomattox he would have had to act under his much narrower peace powers, and he frankly admitted that he was not certain of his course. He was ready to alter his original plan, he announced, whenever he became convinced that a change was wise. He recognized that "so great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in each State, that no inclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals." But he also said that the important principles must be inflexible, and we may be certain that he would have clung to a half-dozen tenets regarding Reconstruction.

We may be certain, first, that he would have op-

²⁰ Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, Volume IX, 457.

posed all confiscation of Southern property and all harsh punishment for former Confederates.²¹ He had signed a Confiscation Act, but with great reluctance and the hope and expectation that it would apply only to slaves. His later attitude toward confiscation was indicated by his telegram to General Grant on April 6, after the fall of Richmond, saying that it might be used as a penalty for prolongation of the war, but should be remitted for the people of any State which should promptly lay down its arms. We may be certain, second, that he would have opposed any undue prolongation of military government at the South, for he had already resented military interference with his Reconstruction agencies. In the third place, we may be sure that he would have tried to hasten the restoration of full political privileges to practically all Southerners. His utterances upon amnesty, and his specific promise that he would enlarge the terms of his amnesty proclamation of 1863, show as much. It is clear, in the fourth place, that he would have opposed the immediate grant of suffrage to all negroes, for he explicitly said that he wished to give the vote only to the "very intelligent, and those who serve our cause as soldiers." It is certain, in the fifth

²¹ "Enough lives have been sacrificed; we must extinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union." Nicolay and Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: A History*, X, 284.

place, that he would have stood like a rock for securing to the former slaves equal economic rights and educational privileges, with full social justice; he had so declared again and again. Sixth and finally, it seems certain that he would have striven to come to a compromise or adjustment with Congress on the Reconstruction issue. Only twice during his whole service as President had he vetoed an act of Congress; on this very question of Reconstruction he had striven to avert an open breach; and in his last public address on April 11 he had spoken of his hope to keep controversy and division within bounds. He was willing to fight for his moderate policy, but while fighting he would have striven tactfully to win a majority in Congress to his side.

Lincoln undoubtedly felt in the closing days of his life that his main pathway lay clear before him. He had set up reconstructed governments in Louisiana, Arkansas, and Tennessee; he meant rapidly to add other States to the list. The Thirty-ninth Congress ended on March 14, 1865. Lincoln would have a free hand until December 4th, and we know that he rejoiced in the fact. Bits of evidence which have just come to light show how busy he was in the last week of his life upon his Reconstruction program; evidence from the papers of his old Illinois friend, General James W. Singleton of Quincy, and from the family

of Francis Harrison Pierpont, head of the rudimentary government in Virginia. It was Virginia that he intended to reconstruct next. On April 10th he telegraphed Pierpont at Alexandria: "Please come up and see me at once." Pierpont came forthwith, and spent three hours alone with Lincoln discussing the Virginia problem. On April 14, an hour before leaving for the Ford Theatre, Lincoln conferred alone for a half hour with General Singleton, a Virginian by birth, an old associate at the Illinois bar, and an unflinching moderate; and to Singleton he gave the last official paper he signed, a pass through the lines to Richmond. Neither Singleton nor Pierpont learned in detail what Lincoln's new plan for Virginia would be. Both learned that he meant to support the leadership of Singleton, to have the legislature called without delay, and to propose to Virginia a reconstruction of the most generous and moderate kind.

Could Lincoln have carried his liberal policy through to victory against the bitter opposition the radicals were certain to offer? Thaddeus Stevens was demanding an extreme vengeance on the "proud rebels"; Wendell Phillips and Sumner were insisting on full negro suffrage. There had been an ominous tone of anger in the closing Senate debates of March, with moderates like Doolittle, Henderson, Lane, and Lyman Trumbull crossing swords with radicals like

Wade and Chandler. Yet the best judges of the day believe that Lincoln would have won most of his contentions. James G. Blaine tells us that "the confidence reposed in him universally in the North, and the respect he had as universally won in the South, would have given such commanding power to his counsel as would have seriously influenced, if not promptly directed, the mode of Reconstruction. . . . He stood triumphant in every relation—chosen by an almost unprecedented vote to his second term, the rebellion conquered, the Union firmly reestablished. Never since Washington's exalted position at the close of the Revolution, or his still more elevated station when he entered upon the Presidency, has there been a man in the United States of so great personal power and influence as Mr. Lincoln then wielded." The secret rejoicing of the radicals when Lincoln fell was the rejoicing of men who knew that he would almost certainly have been too strong for them.

Great as was the bitterness and rancor in some quarters, in other quarters there were already encouraging signs of reconciliation and amity. Nowhere was this more true than among the fighters themselves; the example which Lincoln, the commander-in-chief, had set, was followed by all his principal subordinates in the field. At Appomattox Grant gave way to a feeling of sympathy for his gallant antago-

nists. He not only gave Lee's men their horses, baggage, and side-arms, but he exceeded his instructions in granting a practical amnesty to the whole of Lee's army. Sherman, when Johnston's army surrendered, felt the same generous impulse. He granted amnesty, and going further, promised that the President would recognize the several State governments as soon as their officers and men had taken the oath of loyalty. In the West a significant incident occurred when General Richard Taylor's army surrendered to General Canby. The Union officers invited the Confederates to a luncheon; as they were seated at the table, a military band outside struck up "Hail, Columbia!"; excusing himself with a courtesy which Taylor said equalled anything in the pages of Froissart, Canby stepped to the door, the music stopped for a moment, and then the strains of "Dixie" were heard. The Confederates, not to be outdone in gallantry, demanded the national air, and both sides joined in toasting the flag of a reunited country. These fighters felt, like Lincoln, that there must be a reunion not of force but of hearts; not of compulsion, but of good will and comradeship.

There was a sense in which the war itself, harsh and cruel as it was, had laid the basis for a truer reunion. Not merely had it abolished slavery; it had taught the two sections a new respect for each other.

Northerners who had once looked down on the Southern slaveholders had learned a better opinion of them; they could not think of Lee and Stonewall Jackson, of Pickett's charge, of

The cry that rang through Shiloh's woods,
And Chickamauga's solitudes,
The fierce South cheering on her sons!

without a meed of admiration. Southerners who had curled the lip at the Northern shopkeepers had been taught, at Vicksburg and Gettysburg, the quality of their countrymen. On this foundation of mutual respect Lincoln, had he lived, would have striven to rear a fairer Union than before. He would have met abuse and opposition. But in facing Thaddeus Stevens and Ben Wade he would have appealed to the innate idealism of the American people, an idealism which is never long deaf to an appeal rightly presented.²²

With Lincoln's death, the processes of Reconstruction and reunion gradually fell into the hands of men who reversed his final admonition, and whose watchword seemed at times to be "charity for none and malice for all." Lincoln's plan was discarded. Yet his underlying policy was not forgotten, and when

²² One of the letters of Lincoln's last day, April 14, 1865, thanked General Van Alen for his support "in the efforts I may make to restore the Union, so as to make it, to use your language, a Union of hearts and hands as well as of States."

the two sections began gradually to draw together again, the memory of his kindly acts, his moderate words, his faith in the fraternal reunion of all Americans, became a potent force in hastening their reconciliation. In the South his name has long been revered as one of the truest friends the Southern people ever had. In the North he is recalled as a leader who was more generous than others because he was wiser than others. In the country as a whole, where there is now no real dividing line between North and South, his ideal of the Union is our common ideal.

Appendix

AT THE annual dinner on February 12, 1930, the Sustaining Members of the Abraham Lincoln Association had as their guest one who, many years ago, had a most interesting and unusual contact with Abraham Lincoln. This guest was presented to those present by Mr. Arthur D. Mackie, of the Board of Directors, in the following words:

“During December of last year I received a letter from Mr. Loren E. Brown of Jackson, Michigan, who happens to be one of my associates and also a non-resident member of the Abraham Lincoln Association. Enclosed with this letter was a photostatic copy of the reply of Mr. Lincoln to a letter which he had received from a little girl, then living in Westfield, New York, audaciously suggesting that he grow whiskers to improve his appearance. The writer, in his letter to me, stated that he had enjoyed the acquaintance of this little girl all his life and offered the suggestion that she might be prevailed upon to attend this anniversary tonight.

“The suggestion was so enthusiastically accepted

by the Board of Directors that I promptly phoned Mr. Brown of the action taken and suggested that a written invitation to such an important personage was not in keeping with the importance of the event, and suggested that he arrange his business so as to extend to this little girl in Delphos, Kansas, a personal invitation on behalf of the Abraham Lincoln Association. That his mission was fruitful is evidenced here tonight.

“In Westfield, New York, in October, 1860, a father brought home from the fair a campaign poster of Lincoln and Hamlin. A little eleven-year-old daughter of the household looked at that picture, and, being a great admirer of Lincoln and wanting him to look his best, drew a mental picture of Lincoln with a beard and decided it was a marked improvement.

“Giving expression to her thoughts, this little girl sat down, on October 15, 1860, and wrote Mr. Lincoln a letter, which she commenced by saying that her father had just brought home his picture and that of Hamlin from the fair. She said she was a girl eleven years old and asked if he had any girls her age—perhaps one of them could answer her letter if he could not. She had four brothers and two of them were going to vote for him. She thought, however, that he could greatly improve his appearance if he

grew whiskers, adding as an inducement that if he did, she would try her best to coax her two Democratic brothers to vote for him; that her father was going to vote for him and she wished she were a man so she could vote for him too.

“Probably she thought this rather free criticism of Lincoln’s personal appearance might give offense, so, to soften the blow, she assured him she thought ‘the rail fence around his picture looked real pretty.’ In conclusion, she asked him to please answer her letter ‘right off,’ and wound up the letter in businesslike fashion with ‘Goodbye—Grace Bedell.’

“In commenting on this incident John G. Nicolay, Lincoln’s private secretary, suggested that ‘Mr. Lincoln’s heart was, no doubt, touched by the unaffected sincere kindness of this childish prattle.’ At any rate, he immediately sent the following equally genuine and sympathetic little note in reply:

“Private Springfield, Ills., Oct. 19, 1860
Miss Grace Bedell—
My dear little Miss:

Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received.

I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughters—I have three sons—one seventeen, one nine, and one seven, years of age—They, with their mother, constitute my whole family—

As to the whiskers, having never worn any,

do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin it now?

Your very sincere well-wisher

A. Lincoln.

“Bear in mind, please, that this exchange of letters was right during the heat of the Presidential campaign and is but another ray illuminating the human side of that great man. That he would take time out to reply to this letter is evidence that Grace’s letter had made an impression. As further evidence, there is the fact that within three months after the exchange of these famous letters, Mr. Lincoln had cultivated a sizable beard.

“Now comes another beautiful picture. On Lincoln’s memorable trip to Washington in February, 1861, his special train passed through Westfield, New York, where it made the usual stop to enable the crowd which had collected to see and hear their President-elect. Mr. Lincoln made a brief speech from the rear platform and concluded by saying he had ‘a little correspondent at Westfield named Grace Bedell, and, if she were present, he would like to see her.’ Little Grace was very far back in the rear of the crowd—in fact, I surmise was heartbroken that she was unable either to see or hear her hero on that occasion—but, upon Mr. Lincoln’s request for her, she was picked up and carried to the steps of his car,

when he stepped down to the platform, shook hands and kissed her, saying, 'You see, Grace, I let my whiskers grow for you,' shook hands again and the train departed.

"This is not a mythical legend. The original letters are in existence. Grace Bedell's letter to Lincoln has but recently come to light and is in the possession of Mr. George A. Dondero of Royal Oak, Michigan, given to him, I understand, by Mrs. Robert Lincoln. The original of Lincoln's letter to Grace Bedell is in possession of our honored guest tonight.

"It is now my very great pleasure and highly esteemed privilege to present to you the most charming, gracious and altogether delightful little Grace Bedell of seventy years ago—now Mrs. Grace Bedell Billings."

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